# Growth & Recovery After Trauma

Week #1

Katie Rider Mundey, Ph.D.

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## Purpose of this Group

- Strengthen PTSD recovery skills
- Enhance stress management skills
- Make meaning of your difficult experiences
- Transform trauma into growth and strength
- Increase overall pleasure and satisfaction

### What About You? Is It All Bad?

- O Have you learned anything as a result of your traumatic experiences?
- O Have you changed in a positive way as a result of your trauma experiences?
- O What do you know now about life that you didn't know before you experienced trauma?

## Posttraumatic Growth (PTG)



### What is PTG?

- O Positive change that occurs as a result of the struggle with highly challenging life crises
- 5 Domains:
  - 1) Greater appreciation of life and changed priorities
  - 2) Warmer, more intimate relationships with others
  - O 3) Greater sense of personal strength
  - 4) Recognition of new possibilities/paths for one's life
  - 5) Spiritual development

## Three Categories: Changed Sense of Self

- "I am not who I was."
- "I am much stronger than I ever imagined. If I lived through this I can live through just about anything."
- "I had to deal with major suffering, so little things don't get to me anymore."
- More vulnerable, yet stronger

## Three Categories: Changed Relationships

- "You find out who your real friends are."
- O "Although we had a pretty good marriage before, this forced us to look at what we meant to each other."
- The "deeper stuff"
- Increased compassion

# Three Categories: Changed Philosophy of Life

- O Changed focus of life from the tangible to the intangible
- Shift in priorities
- "Thin places"

### WHAT?!

- O Does this mean that trauma is all good and we should hope for it?
- O No way! Instead, it shows that trauma can be awful AND we can get something good from it.
- PTSD and PTG co-exist.
- Estimates suggest approximately 30-90% of persons who experience trauma experience some degree of PTG

### Risk Factors for PTSD

- Lower financial and educational status
- Past experience of mental illness
- Suffering physical injury
- Seeing people hurt/killed/maimed
- Feeling sense of helplessness/horror/fear after trauma
- Lack of social support
- Additional stressors (e.g., death of loved one, unemployment, health issues, etc.)

### Maintenance Factors

- Drug/alcohol abuse
- Self-demeaning thoughts
- Withdrawal from family/friends
- Not seeking professional help
- Anger, resentment, depression

## Protective Factors Against PTSD

- Strong support group
- Reliance on family/friends
- O Low levels of shame
- Natural optimism
- Sense of humor
- O Being older and having more life experiences
- Successful experience dealing with past life events
- Effective coping strategies

## Let's practice...

- What are your . . . .
  - O Risk factors?
  - Maintenance factors?
  - Protective factors?

## Video



# GROWTH & RECOVERY AFTER TRAUMA

WEEK #2

KATIE RIDER MUNDEY, PH.D.

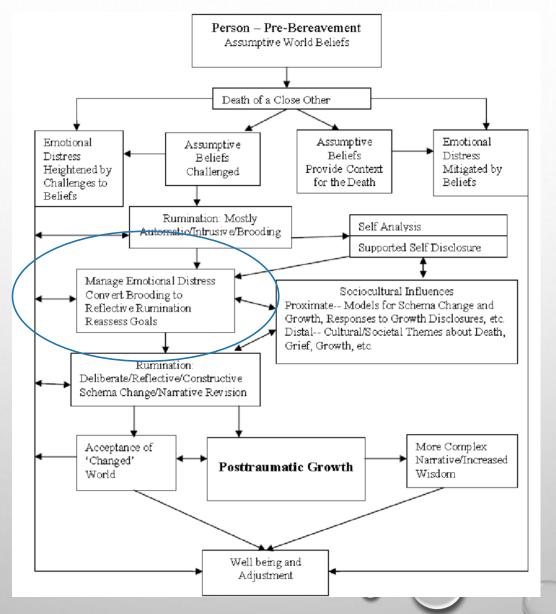
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### **REVIEW**

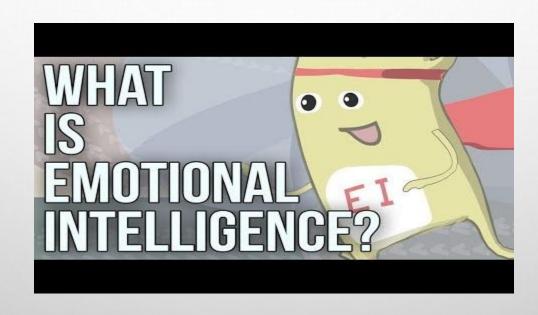
- WHAT IS PTG?
- POSITIVE CHANGE THAT OCCURS AS A RESULT OF THE STRUGGLE WITH HIGHLY CHALLENGING LIFE CRISES
- 5 DOMAINS:
  - 1) GREATER APPRECIATION OF LIFE AND CHANGED PRIORITIES
  - 2) WARMER, MORE INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS
  - 3) GREATER SENSE OF PERSONAL STRENGTH
  - 4) RECOGNITION OF NEW POSSIBILITIES/PATHS FOR ONE'S LIFE
  - 5) SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

### HOW CAN WE EXPERIENCE PTG?





### **EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE**





### EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

- EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IS THE ABILITY TO:
  - PERCEIVE AND EXPRESS EMOTION
  - ASSIMILATE EMOTION WITH THOUGHT
  - UNDERSTAND AND REASON WITH EMOTION
  - REGULATE EMOTION IN SELF AND OTHERS

# EMOTIONAL RESPONSES TO TRAUMA

Fear
Frustrated
Angry
Disgusted
Apathetic
Guilty
Tired
Confused
Sad
Stressed

# EXERCISE: NAME AND UNDERSTAND YOUR FEELINGS

Which of these feelings are most common for you?

What are your top three feelings?

Which feelings cause you the most distress?

Why do you think these feelings dominate the way you feel?

How do these feelings affect your emotional and physical health?



# TRAUMA AND THE BRAIN

# PTSD IS NOT A MENTAL ILLNESS - IT IS A PSYCHOLOGICAL INJURY

HOW DOES YOUR BRAIN CHANGE WITH PTSD?



THIS AREA HELPS US
DISTINGUISH BETWEEN PAST
AND PRESENT MEMORIES



INCREASED ACTIVITY IN THE AMYGDALA

HELPS US PROCESS
EMOTIONS AND IS ALSO
LINKED TO FEAR RESPONSES

VENTROMEDIAL PREFRONTAL CORTEX SHRINKS

THIS REGION REGULATES
NEGATIVE EMOTIONS THAT
OCCUR WHEN CONFRONTED
WITH SPECIFIC STIMULI

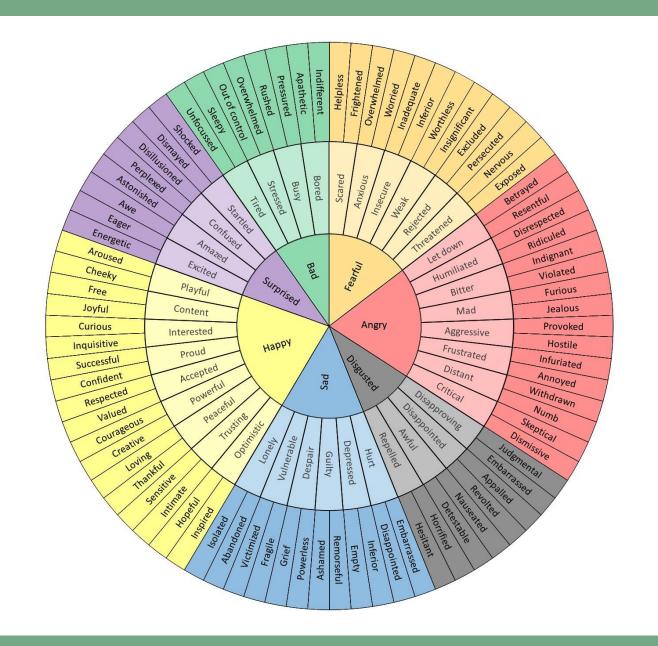
THESE CHANGES IN BRAIN CHEMISTRY ARE THE REASONS WHY ONLY TREATMENTS SUCH AS EMDR AND CBT CAN FULLY REVERSE THE EFFECTS OF PTSD.





- "NAME IT TO TAME IT."
  - SAY TO YOURSELF OUT LOUD WHAT EMOTION YOU ARE EXPERIENCING
  - PROVIDES DISTANCE FROM THE EMOTION
  - BRAIN SCAN RESEARCH SHOWS THAT LABELLING EMOTIONS
     DECREASES ACTIVITY IN THE BRAIN'S EMOTIONAL CENTERS

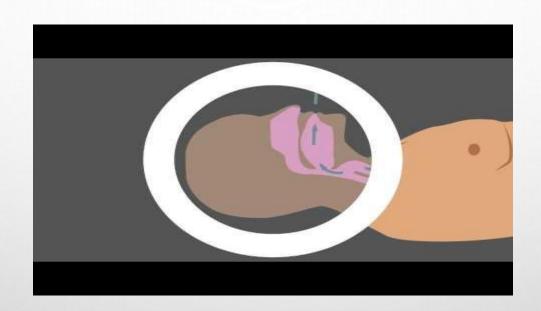
RECOGNIZING
& NAMING
YOUR
EMOTIONS





### DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING

WHAT IS IT?





### DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING

- WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH TRAUMA?
- TURNS OFF EMOTIONAL MIND SO THE RATIONAL MIND CAN "COME BACK ONLINE"
- MA ET AL. (2017) PARTICIPANTS WHO COMPLETED BREATHING TRAINING DEMONSTRATED:
  - SIGNIFICANT DECREASE IN NEGATIVE AFFECT
  - IMPROVED ABILITY TO SUSTAIN ATTENTION
  - SIGNIFICANTLY LOWER CORTISOL LEVELS



### DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING

- RESOURCES:
  - YOUTUBE
  - APPS:
    - BREATHE TO RELAX
    - MINDFULNESS COACH
    - TACTICAL BREATHER
  - SEE HANDOUT



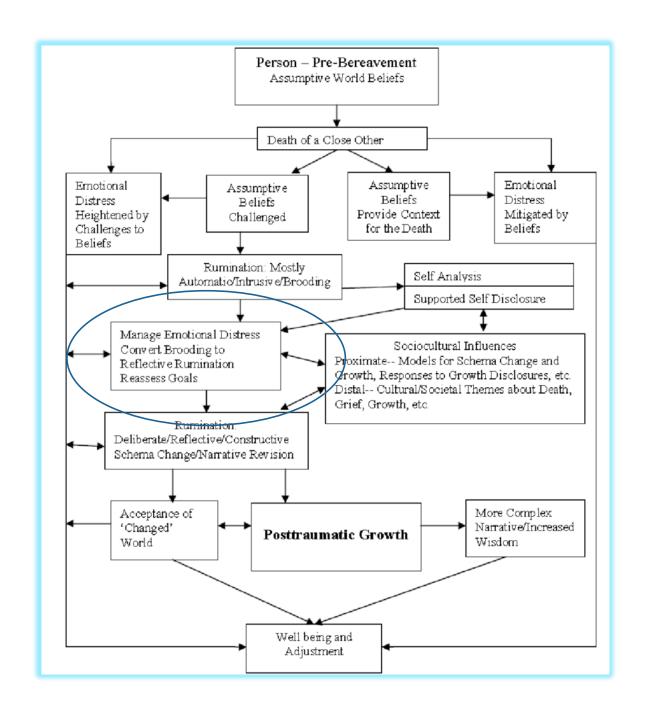
# GROWTH & RECOVERY AFTER TRAUMA

Week #3

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# HOW CAN WE EXPERIENCE PTG?



# EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

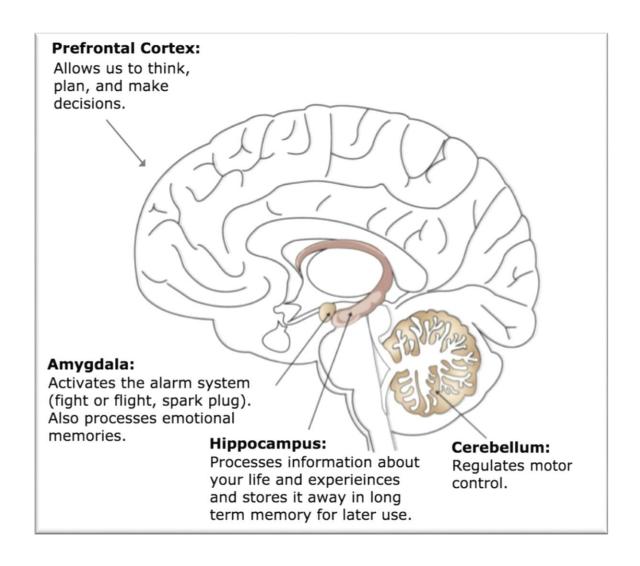
#### Emotional intelligence is the ability to:

- Perceive and express emotion
- Assimilate emotion with thought
- Understand and reason with emotion
- Regulate emotion in self and others

## TRAUMA & THE BRAIN



# TRAUMA & THE BRAIN



### TRAUMA & THE BRAIN

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THESE CHANGES IN BRAIN CHEMISTRY ARE THE REASONS WHY ONLY TREATMENTS SUCH AS EMDR AND CBT CAN FULLY REVERSE THE EFFECTS OF PTSD.



## REVIEW: STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING EMOTIONS

- Recognize and name emotions
- \*"Name it to tame it."
- Diaphragmatic breathing

## STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING EMOTIONS

Progressive Muscle Relaxation



## STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING EMOTIONS

Guided Imagery



Having strong emotions means I am out of control.

If I let myself experience strong emotions they will last forever.

My emotions speak the absolute truth.

Some emotions are stupid.

Other people know better than I do what I feel.

Emotions happen for no reason.

Emotions provide me with valuable information.

I am my emotions.

### EMOTIONS: TRUE OR FALSE

# STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING EMOTIONS

- ☐ Mindfulness = the practice of paying attention in the present moment without judgment.
- Mindfulness is . . .
- Intentional
- ■Non-judgmental



# STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING EMOTIONS

#### Mindfulness

R = Recognize (label with curiosity the feeling you are experiencing.

A = Accept (accept that this is what you are feeling in the here and now)

I = Investigate (how is the emotion affecting your body; are there any thoughts associated with this emotion)

N = Not-Identify (do not overly personalize the emotion; remember the emotion is just a reaction; like a wave the emotion will come and go)



# Growth & Recovery After Trauma

Week #4

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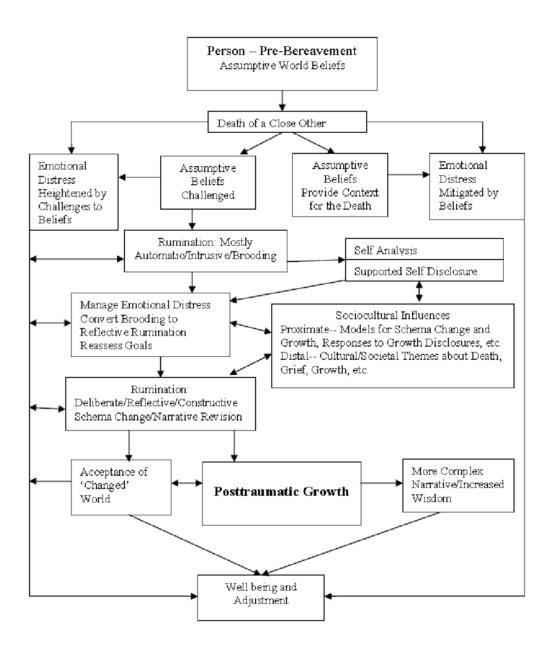


# Review

- Positive change that occurs as a result of the struggle with highly challenging life crises
- 5 Domains:
  - 1) Greater appreciation of life and changed priorities
  - 2) Warmer, more intimate relationships with others
  - 3) Greater sense of personal strength
  - 4) Recognition of new possibilities/paths for one's life
  - 5) Spiritual development







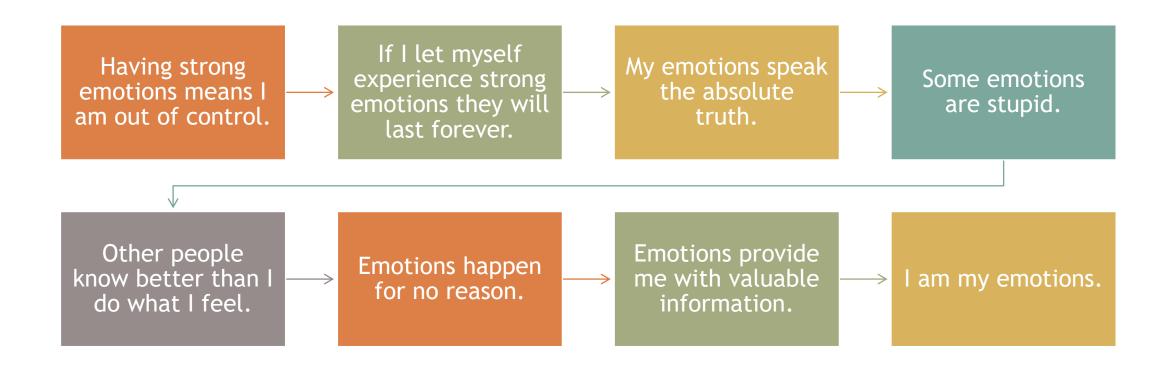
# Review: How do we get PTG?

- We have to be able to effectively manage the emotional distress caused by the trauma.
- Therefore, emotional intelligence is key!
- Emotional intelligence is the ability to:
  - Perceive and express emotion
  - Assimilate emotion with thought
  - Understand and reason with emotion
  - Regulate emotion in self and others

# Emotion Regulation Strategies

- Recognize and name emotions
- "Name it to tame it."
- Diaphragmatic breathing
- Progressive muscle relaxation
- Guided Imagery





# Emotions: True or False?



When we experience a strong negative emotion, it points to an important personal need that is not being met.

Feeling = a signal that a key need is NOT being met.

Identifying the unmet need underlying the emotions allows us to take better care of ourselves and respond more appropriately.

# Strong Negative Emotions = Unmet Needs

# Let's Determine the Need

- Questions to ask yourself:
  - "What do I need when I experience (emotion here)?
  - "When I felt that way, what did I need in that moment?"
  - "What need is not being met here?"
  - "What is this emotion telling me about what I need?"
  - Ultimately . . . "What can I do to get this need met in a healthy way?"

# Let's Practice

#### **Emotion**

- Anger
- Sadness
- Weak
- Inadequate
- Lonely
- Fear
- Ashamed
- Insecure

#### **Potential Underlying Need**

- Respect
- Comfort
- Encouragement
- Recognition
- Connection
- Safety
- ?



### Self-actualization

desire to become the most that one can be

#### Esteem

respect, self-esteem, status, recognition, strength, fro

### Love and belonging

friendship, intimacy, family, sense of connection

### Safety needs

personal security, employment, resources, health, pro-

### Physiological needs

air, water, food, shelter, sleep, clothing, reproduction

# Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

- The lower level needs MUST be met before we can consider the higher level needs.
- How are you doing with ensuring that your needs are being met in a healthy way?
- Whose responsibility is it to ensure that your emotional needs are satisfied?



### Use I language.

- "I feel \_\_\_\_\_"
- "When you \_\_\_\_\_"
- "Because "
- "I need \_\_\_\_\_"

Make sure the timing is right.

Don't apologize!

No need to over-explain.

Be confident.

### Communicating Emotional Needs to Others

Form of meditation designed to help you feel more connected and kind to ourselves and others.

#### Research shows that loving-kindness mediation . . .

- Increases social connectedness (Hutcherson et al., 2008; Kol et al., 2013)
- Increases feelings of happiness and well-being (Fredrickson et al. 2008)
- Reduces chronic pain (Carson et al., 2005)
- Improves depression and PTSD symptoms (Kearney et al., 2013)
- Activates empathy in the brain (Hutcherson et al., 2014)
- Slows biological acing (Hoge et al., 2013)
- Decreases self-criticism (Shahar et al., 2014)

# Loving-Kindness Mediation

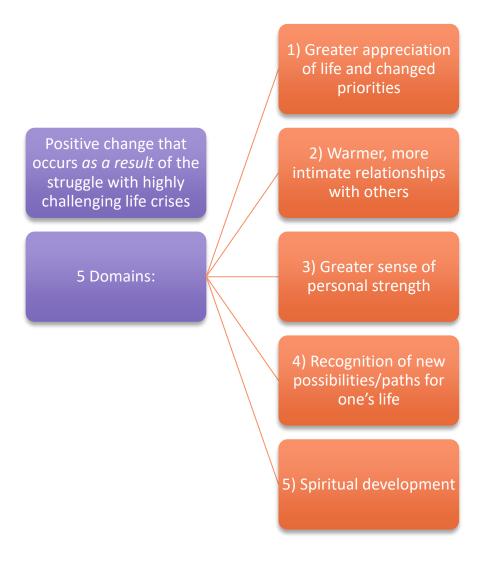
# Let's Practice





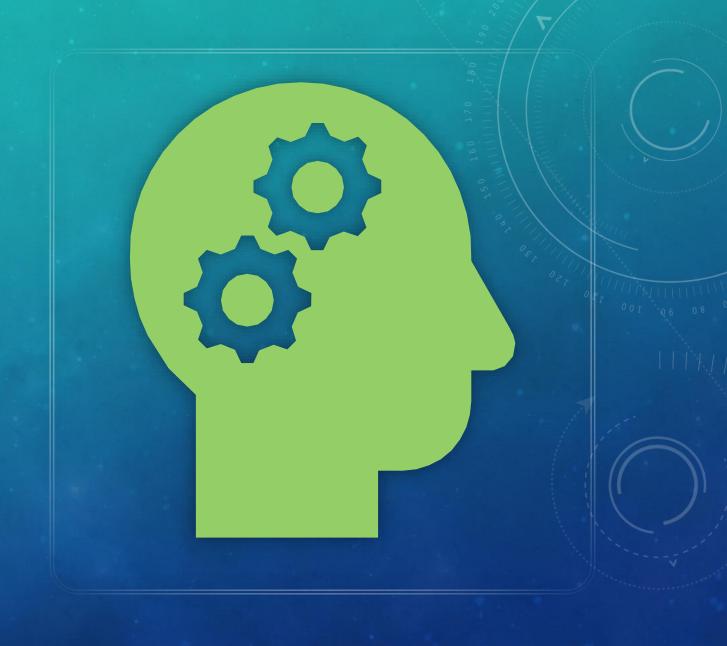


# REVIEW: PTG



# REVIEW: EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

- Emotional intelligence is the ability to:
  - Perceive and express emotion
  - Assimilate emotion with thought
  - Understand and reason with emotion
  - Regulate emotion in self and others



## EMOTION REGULATION STRATEGIES

Recognize and name emotions

"Name it to tame it."

Diaphragmatic breathing

Progressive muscle relaxation

**Guided imagery** 

Use emotions to identifying underlying unmet needs

Mindfulness = the practice of paying attention in the present moment without judgment.

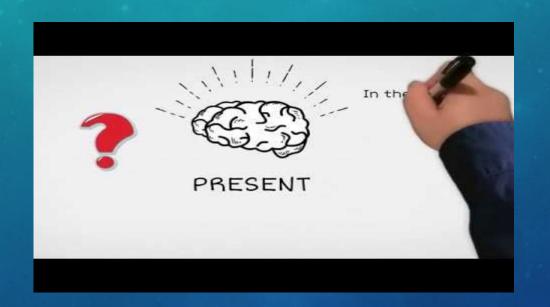
Mindfulness is . . .

Intentional

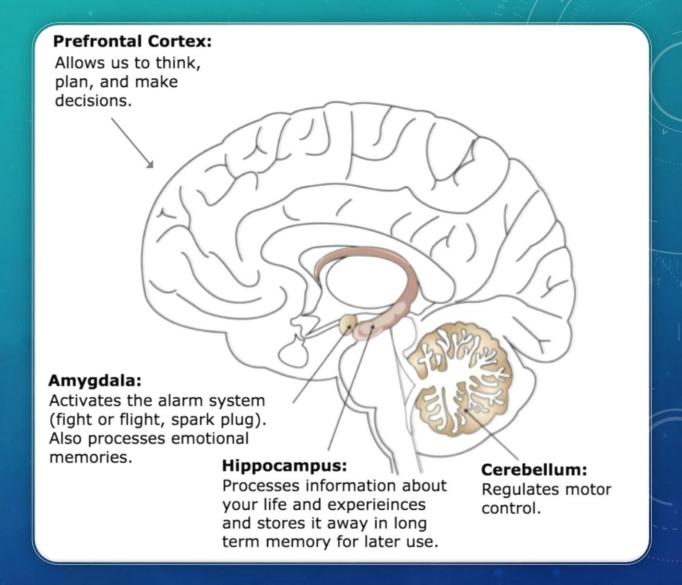
Non-judgmental

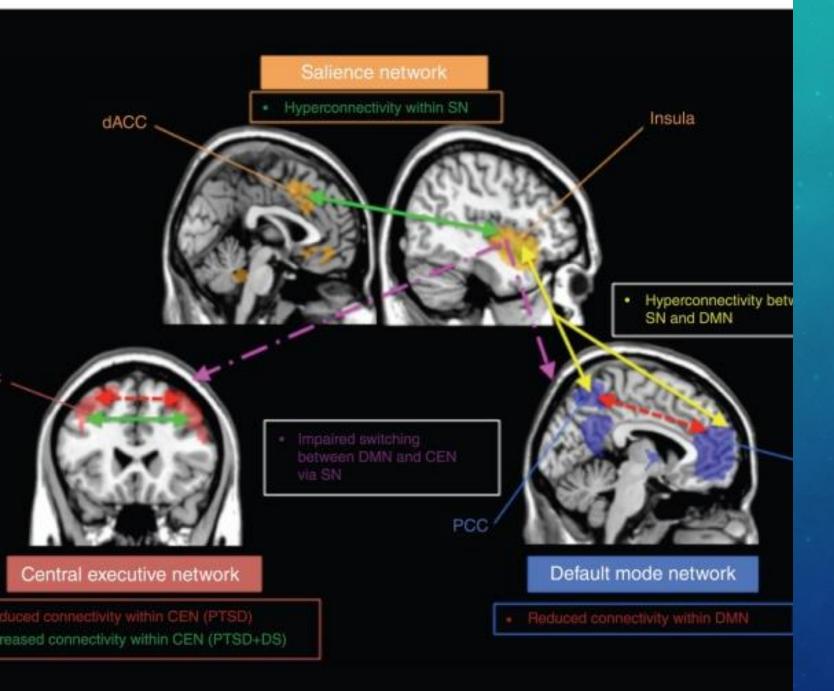
MINDFULNESS

# MINDFULNESS



# CONNECTION BETWEEN PTSD AND MINDFULNESS?



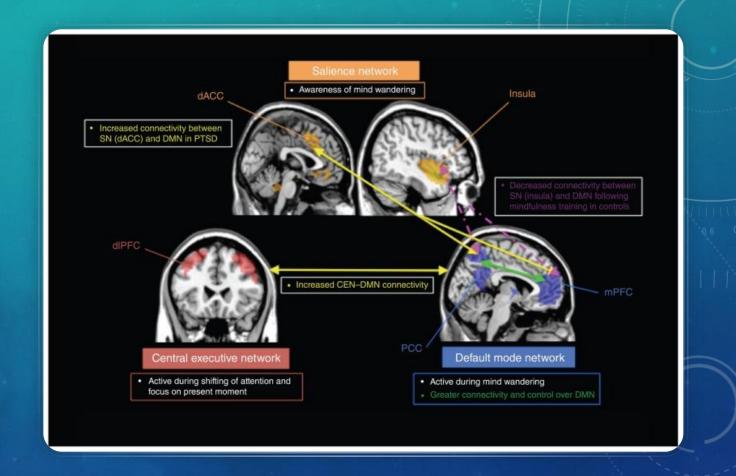


### PTSD & THE BRAIN

- Increased connectivity between the salience-network and the default mode network
- Decreased connectivity between central executive network, salience network, and the default mode network

# PTSD AND THE BRAIN: IMPACT OF MINDFULNESS

- Decreased connectivity between salience network and default control network
- Restored connections between central executive network, default mode network, and salience network



### MINDFULNESS STRATEGIES

R = Recognize (label with curiosity the feeling you are experiencing.

A = Accept (accept that this is what you are feeling in the here and now)

I = Investigate (how is the emotion affecting your body; are there any thoughts associated with this emotion)

N = Not-Identify (do not overly personalize the emotion; remember the emotion is just a reaction; like a wave the emotion will come and go)

# MINDFUL BODY SCAN

LET'S PRACTICE!

#### BODY SCAN MEDITATION



SIT UP, KEEPING THE BACK AS STRAIGHT AS POSSIBLE. FIND A POSTURE THAT IS BOTH ENERGIZED AND EASEFUL



BRING GENERAL AWARENESS TO THE POSTURE AND PRESENCE OF THE BODY AS IT IS IN THIS



STAY WITH THE PHYSICAL BODY, ALLOWING THE THOUGHTS TO COME AND GO WITHOUT CLINGING



BRING AWARENESS TO INDIVIDUAL PLACES IN THE BODY, STARTING AT THE TOP AND WORKING YOUR WAY DOWN



WWW.ONEMINDDHARMA.COM/BODY

# LOVING-KINDNESS -MEDITATION

Form of meditation designed to help you feel more connected and kind to ourselves and others.

Research shows that loving-kindness meditation . .

- Increases social connectedness (Hutcherson et al., 2008; Kol et al., 2013)
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## LOVING-KINDNESS MEDITATION: LET'S PRACTICES



# GROWTH AND RECOVERY AFTER TRAUMA

WEEK #6

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### **REVIEW**

PTG =



Positive change that occurs as a result of the struggle with highly challenging life crises



#### 5 Domains:

- I) Greater appreciation of life and changed priorities
- 2) Warmer, more intimate relationships with others
- 3) Greater sense of personal strength
- 4) Recognition of new possibilities/paths for one's life
- 5) Spiritual development

### **REVIEW**



- Emotional intelligence is the ability to:
  - Perceive and express emotion
  - Assimilate emotion with thought
  - Understand and reason with emotion
  - Regulate emotion in self and others

### EMOTION REGULATION STRATEGIES

Recognize and name emotions

"Name it to tame it."

Diaphragmatic breathing

Progressive muscle relaxation

Guided Imagery

Using emotions to identify underlying unmet needs

**MINDFULNESS!** 

### MINDFULNESS IS ...

The practice of paying attention in the present moment without judgment.

Mindfulness is:

Intentional

Non-judgmental

### MINDFULNESS STRATEGIES

# Body scan technique

Loving-kindness meditation

Mindful eating

Gratitude meditation

### MINDFUL EATING



- We often eating mindlessly due to distraction: television, phone, iPad, "eating on the go"
- We may use food to "soothe" ourselves = emotional eating
- Leads to poor food choices, overeating, lack of enjoyment of food

### MINDFUL EATING

Being aware of how you eat

Sensing and savoring food-truly tasting it

Knowing your hunger and fullness cues

Paying attention to the process of eating

Understanding your emotional triggers

Eating to nourish your body and meet your hunger needs

Adopting a mindful mind-set, one in which you don't judge yourself

Being alert and observant to your food choices

# BENEFITS OF MINDFUL EATING



Mindfulness teaches you to be less reactive to stress- which reduces emotional eating.

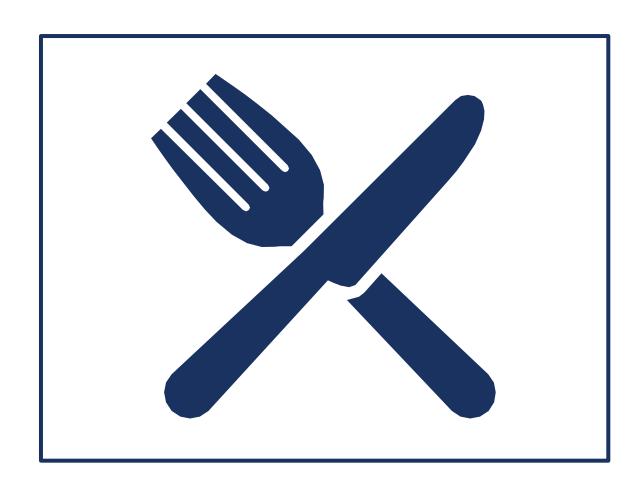


When you tune in to your body you stop eating when you are full and eat more realistic portion sizes.



You notice problematic thinking and feelings about food and how it impacts the way you eat.

#### MINDFUL EATING



Let's practice!

# GRATITUDE

- What is gratitude? (Emmons and McCullough, 2003)
  - Recognizing that one has obtained a positive outcome
  - Recognizing that there is an external source for this positive outcome



#### Emotional Benefits:

- Enhances long-term happiness (Emmons & McCullough, 2003)
- Positive impact on psychological well-being, selfesteem, and depression even when controlling for personality (Chi-Che Lin, 2017)
- Reduces envy and facilitates positive emotions (Amin, 2014)
- Protects against suicidal thoughts (Krysinka, Lester, Lyke, & Corveleyn, 2015)

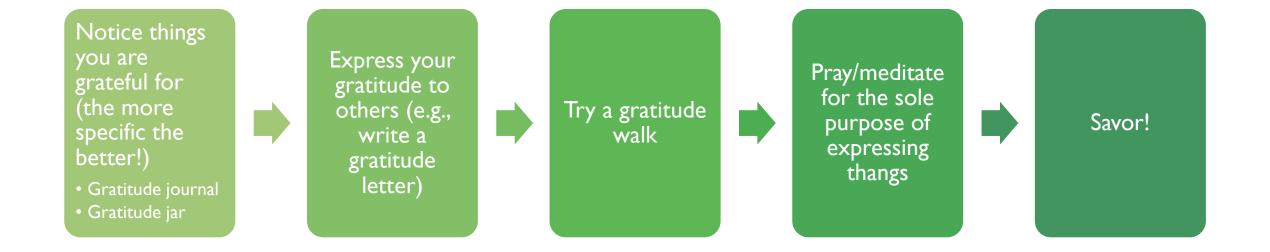
- Social Benefits:
  - People who are more grateful have wider friend networks (Amin, 2014)
  - Improves relationship quality with romantic partners (Algoe, Fredrickson, & Gable, 2013)
  - Improves quality of friendships (Lambert & Fincham, 2011)
  - Increases access to social support (Wood, Maltby, Gillett, Linley, & Joseph, 2008)
  - Protects family relationships in the face of stress (Stoeckel, Weissbrod, & Ahrens, 2015)

- Personality Benefits:
  - Increases optimism by 5-10% (Amin, 2014)
  - Enhances sense of spirituality (Urgesi, Aglioti, Skrap, & Fabbro, 2010)
  - Makes us more likely to share with others, even at our own expense (DeSteno, Bartlett, Baumann, Williams, & Dickens, 2010)
  - Promotes decreased materialism (Tsang, Carpenter, Roberts, Frisch, & Carlisle, 2014)
  - Enhances optimism (Lashani, Shaeiri, Asghari-Moghadam, & Golzari, 2012)



#### Physical Benefits:

- Reduced depressive symptoms (Seligman at al., 2005)
- Reduces blood pressure among those with hypertension (Shipon, 1977)
- Improves sleep quality (Jackowska, Brown, Ronaldson, & Steptoe, 2016)
- Increases frequency of exercise (Emmons & McCullough, 2003)
- Associated with overall better physical health (Hill, Allemand, & Roberts, 2013)



#### PRACTICING GRATITUDE

# PRACTICING GRATITUDE

- Gratitude Mindfulness Mediation
- Let's practice!

# GROWTH & RECOVERY AFTER TRAUMA

Group #7

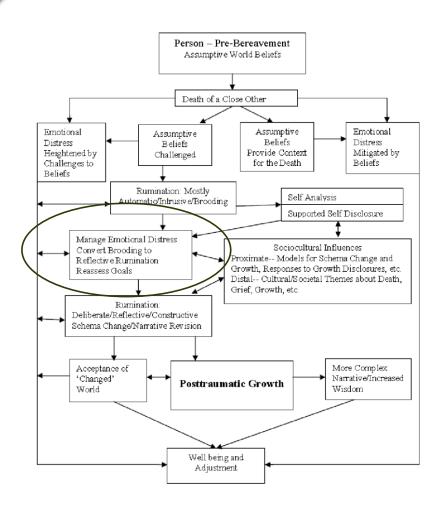
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- Posttraumatic Growth What we are aiming for!
  - Positive change that occurs as a result of the struggle with highly challenging life crises
    - > 5 areas:
      - ▶ Greater appreciation of life and changed priorities
      - ➤ Warmer, more intimate relationships with others
      - ▶ Greater sense of personal strength
      - ▶ Recognition of new possibilities/paths for one's life
      - > Spiritual development

**REVIEW** 



▶ How can we experience PTG?

### POSTTRAUMATIC GROWTH

In order to process our trauma and make meaning of it, we must be able to manage the intense emotions caused by the trauma.

#### Emotional intelligence is the ability to . .

Perceive and express emotion

Assimilate emotion with thought

Understand and reason with emotion

Regulate emotion in self and others

# EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Recognize and name emotions

"Name it to tame it"

Diaphragmatic breathing

Progressive muscle relaxation

Guided imagery

Using emotions to identify underlying unmet needs

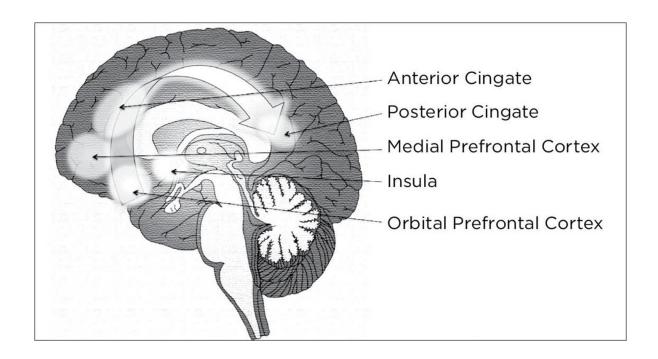
#### Mindfulness

- •Body scan
- •Loving-kindness meditation
- Mindful eating
- Gratitude meditation

# STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

- What have you been practicing?
- ▶ What is working?
- ▶ What isn't working?
- ▶ What is getting in the way of your practice?

#### CHECK-IN



# TRAUMA AND THE BODY

- Self-sensing system ("mohawk of selfawareness"
  - Includes the orbital prefrontal cortex, the medial prefrontal cortex, the anterior cingulate, the posterior cingulate, and the insula
  - Responsible for registering internal states and determining the personal relevance of incoming information

Research shows that individuals with trauma histories show decreased activity in these self-centers of the brain

#### Why?

- In response to trauma and the dread that follows, individuals learn to shut down the brain areas that transmit feelings that accompany terror.
- What's the problem with this? These same brain areas are responsible for the emotions and sensations that form the foundation of our human experiences.
- So, in an attempt to avoid the bad stuff, the good stuff is also shut out.
- "What we witnessed here was a tragic adaptation: In an effort to shut off terrifying sensations, they also deadened their capacity to feel fully alive." (van Der Kolk, 2014, p. 94)

## TRAUMA AND THE BODY

Learn to ignore our own internal signals and warning signs

Can result in poor self-care

Come to rely on external tools (e.g., drugs, alcohol, constant reassurance, etc.) for regulaion

TRAUMA AND THE BODY

▶ "Trauma victims cannot recover until they become familiar with and befriend the sensations in their bodies. Being frightened means that you live in a body that is always on guard. Angry people live in angry bodies. The bodies of child-abuse victims are tense and defensive until they find a way to relax and feel safe. In order to change, people need to become aware of their sensations and the way that their bodies interact with the world around them. Physical self-awareness is the first step in releasing the tyranny of the past." van der Kolk (2014), "The Body Keeps the Score," p. 102

# SOLUTION: BEFRIENDING THE BODY

1 -> 2 -> 3

#### Step 1: Notice

What is going on in my body right now?

#### Step 2: Describe

- Put words to the physical sensations beneath the emotions
- •E.g., pressure, heat, muscular tension, tingling, caving in, feeling hollow

# Step 3: Give shape to your experience

• Describe the shape, color, size, etc.

# FEELING OUR FEELINGS: EMBODIED EMOTIONS

# LISTEN TO YOUR BODY: EMBODIMENT

- ▶ In the moment:
  - ▶ "Notice this . . ."
  - "What happens next?"
    - What is your body communicating to you right now?
    - "Once you start approaching your body with curiosity rather than fear, everything shifts." van der Kolk (2014), "The Body Keeps the Score," p. 275

Exteroception = awareness of and interaction with sensory experiences outside of our bodies (i.e., sight, sound, touch, smell, taste)

Proprioception = awareness of orientation of our bodies without having to consciously think about it

Interoception = awareness of our internal states

# SENSORY FEEDBACK SYSTEMS

- ► H: Hungry (Do I need something to eat?)
- A: Angry (Am I upset? Do I need to relax?)
- L: Lonely (Do I need to reach out for connection?)
- ➤ T: Tired (Do I need to rest?)

#### BEFRIENDING THE BODY

- ► Early research suggests that yoga is an effective adjunctive form of treatment for trauma survivors (van der Kolk et al., 2014)
- ▶ Yoga increases activation of the basic self-system
- ▶ In other words, it reconnects us to the <u>wisdom</u> of our own bodies

### YOGA



YOGA

# Growth & Recovery After Trauma

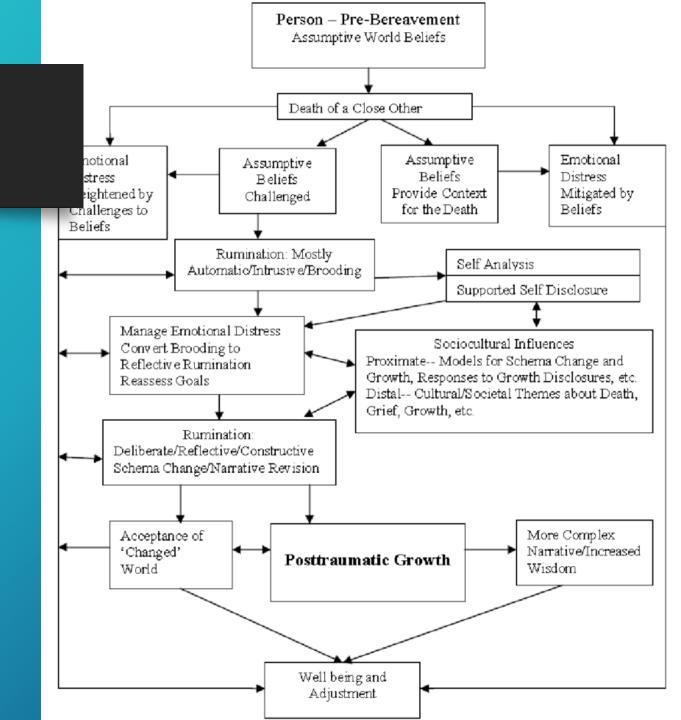
Katie Rider Mundey, Ph.D. 912-408-2900 ext. 2716

### Where We've Been, Where We're Going

- Posttraumatic Growth What we are aiming for!
  - Positive change that occurs as a result of the struggle with highly challenging life crises
    - 5 areas:
      - Greater appreciation of life and changed priorities
      - Warmer, more intimate relationships with others
      - Greater sense of personal strength
      - Recognition of new possibilities/paths for one's life
      - Spiritual development

# Where We've Been, Where We're Going

- How to experience PTG
- MUST learn to manage the emotional distress caused by the trauma in order to extract meaning from it.



# Where We've Been, Where We're Going

Learned how to enhance our emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence involves ability to .

•

Perceive and express emotion

Assimilate emotion with thought

Understand and reason with emotion

Regulate emotion in self and others

### Last Week . .

Trauma disconnects us from our self-sensing system (i.e., mohawk of self-awareness)

Result . . .

- Ignore own internal signals and warning signs
- Poor self-care
- Rely on external tools (e.g., drugs, ETOH, eating, shopping, numbing)

### Solution: Befriending the Body

1

Feeling our feelings (i.e., embodied emotions)

2

Listening to our body (i.e., noticing what is happening in the moment and determining what happens next)

### Solution: Befriending the Body

- Sensory Feedback Systems
  - Exteroception = awareness of and interaction with sensory experiences outside of our bodies (i.e., sight, sound, touch, smell, taste)
  - Proprioception = awareness of orientation of our bodies without having to consciously think about it
  - Interoception = awareness of our internal states

### Solution: Befriending the Body

- H: Hungry (Do I need something to eat?)
- A: Angry (Am I upset? Do I need to relax?)
- L: Lonely (Do I need to reach out for connection?)
- T: Tired (Do I need to rest?)

- Yoga
  - Early research suggests that yoga is an effective adjunctive form of treatment for trauma survivors (van der Kolk et al., 2014)
  - Yoga increases activation of the basic self-system
  - In other words, it reconnects us to the <u>wisdom</u> of our own bodies

# Solution: Befriending the Body

# Befriending the Body: Yoga



### Befriending the Body: Self-Compassion

- A Blessing for One Who is Exhausted John O'Donohue
  - "Draw alongside the silence of stone until it's calmness can claim you. <u>Be excessively gentle with yourself</u>. Stay clear of those vexed in spirit. Learn to linger around someone of ease who feels they have all the time in the world. Gradually, you will return to yourself, having learned a new respect for your heart and the joy that dwells far within slow time."

#### Trauma and Self-Compassion

- When we experience something traumatic we tend to blame ourselves, numb ourselves and/or disregard ourselves.
- Trauma, particularly early childhood trauma, is associated with self-criticism and shame (Gilbert & Proctor, 2006).
- Trauma often leads to "turning inward on the self" (Germer & Neff, 2014).

#### Trauma and Self-Compassion

Stress Response	Stress Response Turned Inward	PTSD Symptoms
Fight	Self-criticism	Arousal
Flight	Self-isolation	Avoidance
Freeze	Self-absorption	Intrustions

#### What's the Solution?

- Self-Compassion
  - 3 main components:
    - Self-kindness = being warm and caring toward ourselves when things go wrong in our lives
    - Sense of common humanity = recognizing the shared suffering when difficulties arise, as opposed to feeling completely alone
    - Mindfulness = ability to open to and learn from pain experiences with a nonreactive, balanced awareness



#### **Self-Compassion**



Self-compassion may protect against development of PTSD by decreasing avoidance of emotional discomfort (Thompson & Waltz, 2008)

Higher self-compassion associated with decreased anxiety, shame, and guilt and increased willingness to experience sadness, anger, and closeness (Schanche et al., 2011)

Self-compassion is a strong predictor of psychological health among those who have been exposed to trauma (Seligowski et al., 2015)

Self-compassion buffers against guilt among trauma survivors (Valdez & Lilly, 2019)

#### Trauma and Self-Compassion

#### Wrap-Up

- What is your key takeaway from today's class?
- What is your goal for the upcoming week?

# GROWTH & RECOVERY AFTER TRAUMA

GROUP #9

KATIE RIDER MUNDEY, PH.D.

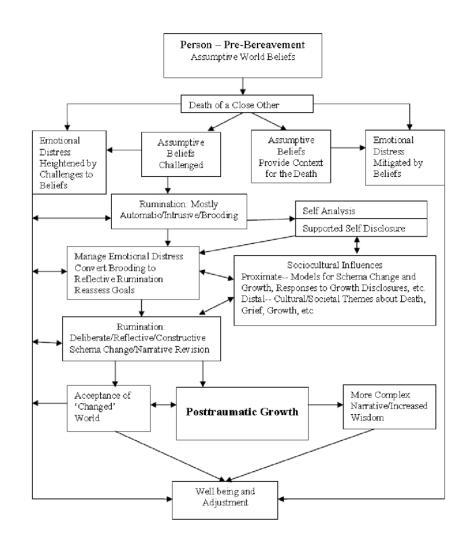
912-408-2900 EXT. 2716

- Posttraumatic Growth What we are aiming for!
  - Positive change that occurs as a result of the struggle with highly challenging life crises
    - 5 areas:
      - Greater appreciation of life and changed priorities
      - Warmer, more intimate relationships with others
      - Greater sense of personal strength
      - Recognition of new possibilities/paths for one's life
      - Spiritual development

#### **REVIEW**

#### **REVIEW**

- How to experience PTG
- MUST learn to manage the emotional distress caused by the trauma in order to extract meaning from it.



#### PTG IN THE ERA OF COVID-19



- Covid-19 Coping Strategies:
  - Limit media exposure
    - Select I-2 I5-minute periods each day to check-in
    - Look only at reputable news sources: cdc.gov; va.gov
  - Stay connected with others
    - Skype
    - Facetime
    - Zoom
    - Phone
  - Get outside (while practicing social distancing)
  - Focus on what you CAN control
  - Look for the "golden nuggets"

#### **REVIEW**

- Trauma disconnects us from our self-sensing system (i.e., mohawk of self-awareness)
- Result ...
  - Ignore own internal signals and warning signs
  - Poor self-care
  - Rely on external tools (e.g., drugs, ETOH, eating, shopping, numbing) to regulate

Feeling our feelings (i.e., embodied emotions)

Listening to our body (i.e., noticing what is happening in the moment and determining what happens next)

**HALT** 

Yoga

**Self-compassion** 

SOLUTION:
BEFRIENDING
THE BODY

#### SELF-COMPASSION

- Self-Compassion
  - **3** main components:
    - Self-kindness = being warm and caring toward ourselves when things go wrong in our lives
    - Sense of common humanity = recognizing the shared suffering when difficulties arise, as opposed to feeling completely alone
    - Mindfulness = ability to open to and learn from pain experiences with a nonreactive, balanced awareness

#### TRAUMA & SELF-COMPASSION

- Trauma disrupts self-compassion!
  - When we experience something traumatic we tend to blame ourselves, numb ourselves and/or disregard ourselves.
  - Trauma, particularly early childhood trauma, is associated with self-criticism and shame (Gilbert & Proctor, 2006).
  - Trauma often leads to "turning inward on the self" (Germer & Neff, 2014).

- Avoid avoidance!
  - Research suggests that avoidance symptoms of PTSD are negatively correlated with self-compassion (Thompson & Waltz, 2008).
  - So, the more you avoid, the less self-compassion you are likely to experience.
  - Develop small exposure exercises.
  - Set aside a small period of time daily to "feel your feelings."

#### SOLUTION: SELF-COMPASSION STRATEGIES

### SOLUTION: SELF-COMPASSION STRATEGIES

- Mindfulness:"What do I need now?"
  - Pay attention in the moment.
  - Connect with the underlying need.
  - Lovingkindness meditation

- Act even if you don't feel
  - Changing behaviors often leads to changing emotions.
  - Treat yourself with compassion even when you don't "feel it."
  - Self-compassion could look like . . .
    - Cup of tea/coffee
    - Hot bath/shower
    - Exercise
    - Talk with a friend
    - Take a walk
    - Listen to music

#### SOLUTION: SELF-COMPASSION STRATEGIES

## SOLUTION: SELFCOMPASSION STRATEGIES

- Treat yourself like you would treat someone else.
  - If someone else made this mistake/had this experience/was feeling this way:
    - What would I say to them?
    - What would I do for them?
    - How would I respond to them?

#### SOLUTION: SELF-COMPASSION STRATEGIES



- Connect with your inner child
  - Picture yourself as you looked during childhood (actually looking at a picture can help)
  - What do you feel toward that child?
  - What does that child need in this moment?
  - Using your mind's eye, direct care, compassion, kindness, and empathy toward that child
  - Remember, that child is you!

- Self-compassion break
  - Take a deep breath
  - Say slowly to self:
    - "This is a moment of suffering."
    - "Suffering is a part of life."
  - Reflect on people around the world who may be suffering like you are.
  - Place both hands on your heart
    - Feel the warmth of your hands
    - Notice the gentle touch of your hands over your heart
    - Feel the rhythmic rising and falling of your chest as you breathe
  - State: "May I be kind to myself. May I live with ease."

## SOLUTION: SELFCOMPASSION STRATEGIES

#### WRAPPING UP

- What is your key takeaway from today's group?
- Write out on goal you plan to work on over the following group related to today's group.

### Growth & Recovery After Trauma

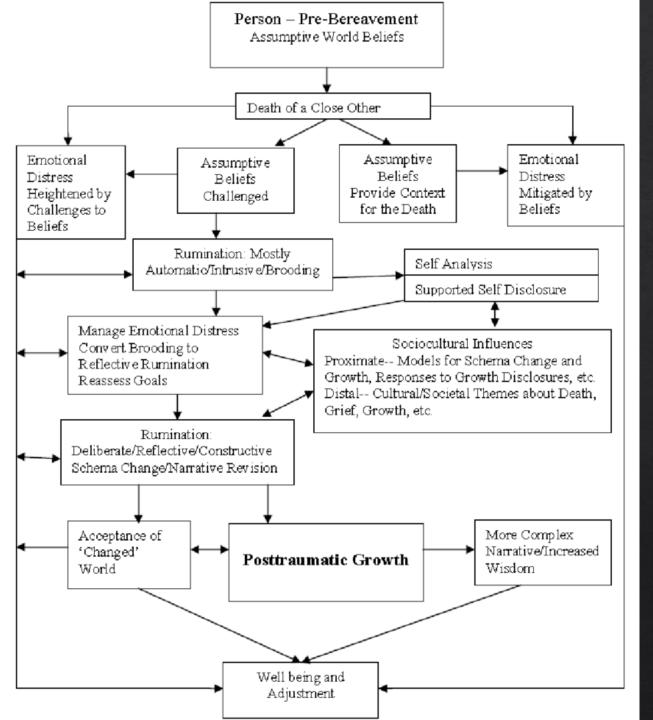
Group #10

Katie rider Mundey, Ph.D.

912-408-2900 ext. 2716

#### Review

- ♦ Posttraumatic Growth What we are aiming for!
  - Positive change that occurs as a result of the struggle with highly challenging life crises
    - ♦ 5 areas:
      - ♦ Greater appreciation of life and changed priorities
      - Warmer, more intimate relationships with others
      - ♦ Greater sense of personal strength
      - Recognition of new possibilities/paths for one's life
      - ♦ Spiritual development



#### Review

- ♦ How to experience PTG
- MUST learn to manage the emotional distress caused by the trauma in order to extract meaning from it.

#### Review

Trauma disconnects us from our self-sensing system (i.e., mohawk of self-awareness)



Ignore own internal signals and warning signs

Poor self-care

Rely on external tools (e.g., drugs, ETOH, eating, shopping, numbing) to regulate Feeling our feelings (i.e., embodied emotions)

Listening to our body (i.e., noticing what is happening in the moment and determining what happens next)

HALT

Yoga

Self-compassion

Solution: befriending the body

#### Self-compassion

#### ♦ Self-Compassion

- ♦ 3 main components:
  - ♦ Self-kindness = being warm and caring toward ourselves when things go wrong in our lives
  - ♦ Sense of common humanity = recognizing the shared suffering when difficulties arise, as opposed to feeling completely alone
  - Mindfulness = ability to open to and learn from pain experiences with a nonreactive, balanced awareness

#### Trauma disrupts self-compassion!

- ♦ When we experience something traumatic we tend to blame ourselves, numb ourselves and/or disregard ourselves.
- ♦ Trauma, particularly early childhood trauma, is associated with self-criticism and shame (Gilbert & Proctor, 2006).
- ♦ Trauma often leads to "turning inward on the self" (Germer & Neff, 2014).

### Trauma & self-compassion

#### ♦ Avoid avoidance!

- ♦ Research suggests that avoidance symptoms of PTSD are negatively correlated with selfcompassion (Thompson & Waltz, 2008).
- So, the more you avoid, the less selfcompassion you are likely to experience.
- ♦ Develop small exposure exercises.
- Set aside a small period of time daily to "feel your feelings."

- Mindfulness: "What do I need now?"
  - ♦ Pay attention in the moment.
  - ♦ Connect with the underlying need.
  - ♦ Lovingkindness meditation

- ♦ Act even if you don't feel
  - Changing behaviors often leads to changing emotions.
  - ♦ Treat yourself with compassion even when you don't "feel it."
  - ♦ Self-compassion could look like . . .
    - Cup of tea/coffee
    - ♦ Hot bath/shower
    - ♦ Exercise
    - ♦ Talk with a friend
    - ♦ Take a walk
    - ♦ Listen to music

- ♦ Treat yourself like you would treat someone else.
  - ♦ If someone else made this mistake/had this experience/was feeling this way:
    - ♦ What would I say to them?
    - ♦ What would I do for them?
    - ♦ How would I respond to them?

- © Connect with your inner child
  - Picture yourself as you looked during childhood (actually looking at a picture can help)
  - What do you feel toward that child?
  - What does that child need in this moment?
  - Using your mind's eye, direct care, compassion, kindness, and empathy toward that child
  - Remember, that child is you!



- ♦ Self-compassion break
  - ♦ Take a deep breath
  - ♦ Say slowly to self:
    - ♦ "This is a moment of suffering."
    - ♦ "Suffering is a part of life."
  - Reflect on people around the world who may be suffering like you are.
  - ♦ Place both hands on your heart
    - ♦ Feel the warmth of your hands
    - Notice the gentle touch of your hands over your heart
    - Feel the rhythmic rising and falling of your chest as you breathe
  - ♦ State: "May I be kind to myself. May I live with ease."

## Self-Compassion and Covid-19

How might self-compassion help you cope with the Covid-19 crisis?

Are you able to extend self-compassion toward yourself for how you are responding to this unusual situation?

How might it be of benefit to you to extend compassion to your loved ones during this time?

#### Wrapping Up

What is your key takeaway from today's group?

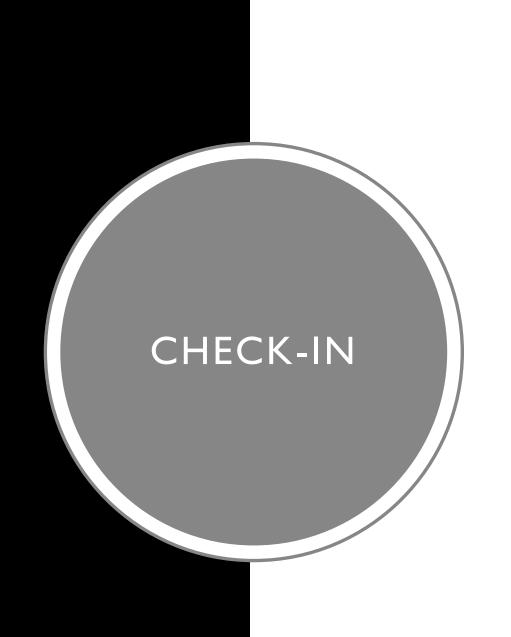
Write out one goal you plan to work on over the following week related to today's group.

## GROWTH AND RECOVERY AFTER TRAUMA

Group #11

Katie Rider Mundey, Ph.D.

912-408-2900 ext. 2716



- How is everyone doing in light of Covid-19?
- What self-compassion strategies did you apply last week?
  - Which ones worked?
  - Which ones proved more challenging?

#### WHERE WE'VE BEEN

- Working to increase our posttraumatic growth (PTG)
  - PTG = Positive change that occurs as a result of the struggle with highly challenging life crises
    - 5 areas:
      - Greater appreciation of life and changed priorities
      - Warmer, more intimate relationships with others
      - Greater sense of personal strength
      - Recognition of new possibilities/paths for one's life
      - Spiritual development

#### EMOTION REGULATION

To achieve PTG, we have to be able to effectively manage the intense emotions brought about by trauma.

Best way to do this is to increase our emotional intelligence, which is the ability to ...

Perceive and express emotion

Assimilate emotion with thought

Understand and reason with emotion

Regulate emotion in self and others

- Recognize and name emotions
- "Name it to tame it"
- Relaxation strategies (i.e., diaphragmatic breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, guided imagery)
- Using emotions to identify underlying unmet needs
- Mindfulness
- Befriending the body
- HALT
- Yoga
- Self-compassion



#### WHAT'S THE NEXT STEP?

Once emotions are managed, we can transition to finding meaning in our difficult experiences.

This requires <u>deliberate rumination</u>

= purposeful reflection on and reexamination of the trauma

- Active not passive
- Involves efforts to resolve the confusion caused by the trauma
- Focus is on finding *meaning* in the trauma

- What has gotten in the way of deliberate rumination for you?
- It is challenging to engage in deliberate rumination when you are struggling with intrusive rumination
- Intrusive rumination involves ...
  - Automatic, unwanted thoughts
  - Usually discussed in the context of PTSD (i.e., intrusive thinking"



#### PERSONAL STRENGTH

## Key to PTG is personal strength

However, we often don't recognize personal strengths unless we look for it

There is huge benefit to looking back to gain strength for moving forward

#### PERSONAL STRENGTH

- Write down 5 personal strengths
- Examples include: compassionate, optimistic, resilient, intuitive, wise, thoughtful, creative, resourceful, courageous, kind, fair, funny, grateful, open-minded, curious, etc., etc.
- How do you know this is a strength? What's the evidence?
- Did this strength exist prior to the trauma, or did it develop as a result of the trauma? If you've always had this strength, how has it changed due to the trauma? If it's new, how did it develop?
- Struggling to identify your strengths? Ask a loved one for their insights.

#### REFLECTION EXERCISE: PERSONAL STRENGTH

What have you done to cope that most clearly demonstrates the strength that has gotten you through your trauma experiences?

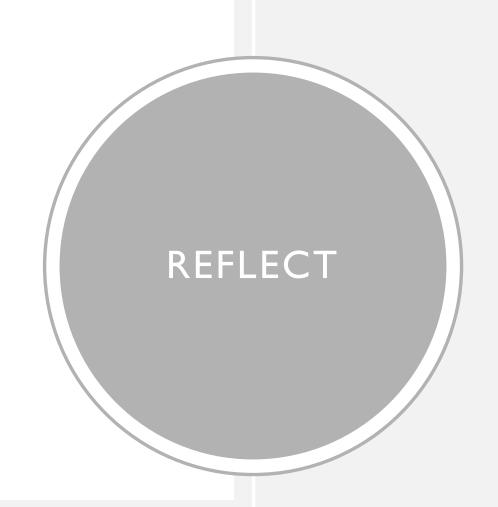
What some are some things that seemed difficult before the trauma that now seem relatively easy given what you have gone through?

What advice to you have for others who think that a situation similar to yours is too difficult to manage?

## TAKE THE "BOTH/AND" APPROACH

- As humans, we like things to be "black-and-white,"
   "either/or"
- However, most things are both/and
- When considering your trauma experiences, you can take a "both/and" approach by . . .
  - Recognizing and honoring the terrible parts of the trauma
  - AND
  - Looking for the "growth points"

- What are some examples of the "both/and" approach?
- Where can you see this reality at play in your own life?
- Ignoring the terrible aspects of trauma does nothing to further recovery, but neither does remaining solely focused on the terrible stuff.
- How might you begin to honor the struggle and search for and take hold of the growth?



# GROWTH AND RECOVERY AFTER TRAUMA

Week #12

Katie Rider

Mundey, Ph.D.

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2716

#### Review

- Working to increase our posttraumatic growth (PTG)
  - PTG = Positive change that occurs as a result of the struggle with highly challenging life crises
    - 5 areas:
      - Greater appreciation of life and changed priorities
      - Warmer, more intimate relationships with others
      - Greater sense of personal strength
      - Recognition of new possibilities/paths for one's life
      - Spiritual development

#### Emotion Regulation Strategies

Recognize and name emotions
"Name it to tame it"
Relaxation strategies (i.e., diaphragmatic breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, guided imagery)
Using emotions to identify underlying unmet needs
Mindfulness
Befriending the body
HALT
Yoga
Self-compassion

Once emotions are managed, we can transition to finding meaning in our difficult experiences.

This requires <u>deliberate rumination</u> = purposeful reflection on and re-examination of the trauma

Active not passive

Involves efforts to resolve the confusion caused by the trauma

Focus is on finding meaning in the trauma

# Moving from Emotion Regulation to Finding Meaning

#### Personal Strength

- Write down 5 personal strengths
- Examples include: compassionate, optimistic, resilient, intuitive, wise, thoughtful, creative, resourceful, courageous, kind, fair, funny, grateful, open-minded, curious, etc., etc.
- How do you know this is a strength? What's the evidence?
- Did this strength exist prior to the trauma, or did it develop as a result of the trauma? If you've always had this strength, how has it changed due to the trauma? If it's new, how did it develop?
- Struggling to identify your strengths? Ask a loved one for their insights.

#### Reflection Exercise: Identifying Personal Strengths

What have you done to cope that most clearly demonstrates the strength that has gotten you through your trauma experiences?

What some are some things that seemed difficult before the trauma that now seem relatively easy given what you have gone through?

What advice to you have for others who think that a situation similar to yours is too difficult to manage?

<sup>&</sup>quot;I know I am strong because (identify and name the evidence)."

## Appreciation of Life

Trauma changes our perspective on what matters. "You never miss the water till the well runs dry."

This often looks like . . .

- Changed priorities
- Increased appreciation for what you already have
- Increased appreciation of the little stuff

What has trauma taught you about what matters in life?

Appreciation of Life: Values

<u>Values</u> = what really matters to you deep in your heart

Satisfaction occurs when our behavior is consistent with our values

#### Life Values

Accountability	Efficiency	Honor	Restraint
Accomplishment	Empathy	Humility	Respect
Authenticity	Enjoyment	Independence	Resourcefulness
Acheivement	Enthusiasm	Ideals	Resiliance
Adventure	Ethics	Ingenuity	Satisfaction
Affection	Equality	Insight	Security
Beauty	Exploration	Intellect	Self-actualization
Belonging	Fairness	Intuition	Selflessness
Balance	Faith	Joy	Service
Career	Family	Justice	Serenity
Caring	Fidelity	Leadership	Stability
Consciousness	Fitness	Love	Spontaneity
Community	Focus	Loyalty	Strength
Compassion	Freedom	Mastery	Teamwork
Connection	Fun	Merit	Truth
Challenge	Generosiy	Money	Temperance
Commitment	Goals	Nature	<b>Thankfulness</b>
Consistency	Goodness	Openness	Thoughtfulness
Communication	Growth	Order	Tolerance
Creativity	Hard work	Optimism	<b>Tradition</b>
Competition	Health	Opportunity	Trust
Dependability	Helping others	Purpose	Understanding
Determination	Honesty	Preparation	Uniqueness
Discipline	Норе	Prudence	Vision
Diversity	Healing	Reliability	Vitality

#### Identifying Values

- Select top 10 values : How might this list look different if you had not experienced trauma?
- Rank them from 1-10
- Now look back at each value and rate from 1-10 the extent to which your current life/behavior reflects this value (1 = not at all; 5 = somewhat; 10 = completely)
- If you rated your behavior as inconsistent with the value consider . . .
  - Do I really value this?
  - If not, what do I truly value?
  - If so, how can I change my lifestyle to better match this value?

What have you lost, or come close to losing, as a result of your trauma that you didn't value enough before?

Are there some things in life that you could develop a greater appreciation for?

In order to appreciate, we must **NOTICE** 

## Appreciation of Life

## Strategies for "Noticing"

- Mindfulness
- Gratitude
- Savoring = the capacity to notice, appreciate, and intensify the positive experiences in our lives
  - Helps to counteract the human tendency to focus on the negative aspects of our lives
  - Diminishes the space available in our brain for negative thinking



Anticipatory = leading up to an event

3 Types of Savoring

Experiential = in the moment

Reminiscent = remembering good times and recalling the positive emotions associated with them

#### Savoring Strategies







虾

Heighten your sensory perceptions (try this while eating a meal)

Compare the outcome to something worse



Remember how quickly time passes

## GROWTH & RECOVERY AFTER TRAUMA

**WEEK #13** 

KATIE RIDER MUNDEY, PH.D.

TO CONTACT ME: I) SEND ME A SECURE MESSAGE (PREFERRED MEANS OF CONTACT) 2) CALL 912-408-2900 EXT. 2916

- Working to increase our posttraumatic growth (PTG)
  - PTG = Positive change that occurs as a result of the struggle with highly challenging life crises
    - 5 areas:
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      - Spiritual development

#### **REVIEW**

#### EMOTION REGULATION STRATEGIES

Self-compassion

Recognize and name emotions

"Name it to tame it"

Relaxation strategies (i.e., diaphragmatic breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, guided imagery)

Using emotions to identify underlying unmet needs

Mindfulness

Befriending the body

HALT

Yoga

#### MOVING FROM EMOTION REGULATION TO FINDING MEANING

Once emotions are managed, we can transition to finding meaning in our difficult experiences.

This requires

deliberate rumination

= purposeful reflection
on and re-examination
of the trauma.

Active not passive

Involves efforts to resolve the confusion caused by the trauma

Focus is on finding meaning in the trauma

#### FINDING MEANING: WHERE WE'VE BEEN

- Personal Strengths: recognizing the strengths that have developed as a result of the trauma
- Appreciation of Life:
  - Identifying values and aligning our behavior with our values
  - Savoring

### APPRECIATION OF LIFE: SAVORING

- Mindfulness
- Gratitude
- Savoring = the capacity to notice, appreciate, and intensify the positive experiences in our lives
  - Helps to counteract the human tendency to focus on the negative aspects of our lives
  - Diminishes the space available in our brain for negative thinking



Anticipatory = leading up to an event

Experiential = in the moment

Reminiscient = remembering good times and recalling the positive emotions associated with them

APPRECIATION OF LIFE: SAVORING

#### APPRECIATION OF LIFE: SAVORING

- © Capitalizing = communicating and celebrating our positive experiences with others
- Take a mental photograph
- Congratulate yourself
- Heighten your sensory perceptions (try this while eating a meal)
- © Compare the outcome to something worse
- Be "in the moment"
- Nemember how quickly time passes

Trauma can have a negative impact on our relationships due to avoidance and withdrawal

However, it can also enrich our relationships:

Challenges self-reliance (we need the assistance of others after trauma!)

Intimacy increases as we let others into our pain and struggles

Become more compassionate/empathic

Appreciate others more and place appropriate value on relationships

#### ENHANCED RELATIONSHIPS

## REFLECTION: TRAUMA & RELATIONSHIPS

- Were there people who pleasantly surprised you when you need help after your trauma experience?
- Who are the people who can best understanding what you are going through? How can you communicate with them effectively?
- What do you know now about relationships that you didn't know prior to experiencing trauma? How can you put that understanding into action?

# EXPERT COMPANIONSHIP



### Expert companions:

Stay focused on your needs and strengths

Provide guidance when it is useful

Help w/ emotions

Help w/ intrusive thoughts

Help you sort out what to believe

#### **EXPERT COMPANIONSHIP**

- Expert companions can take many forms (e.g., therapist, family member, friend, pastor, fellow Veteran, online support group, etc.)
- Key: You HAVE to ask for someone to function in this role for you!
  - Who is someone you can ask for help?
  - Why haven't you asked this person for help before?
  - What is your plan for how you are going to ask this person for help? Be specific.

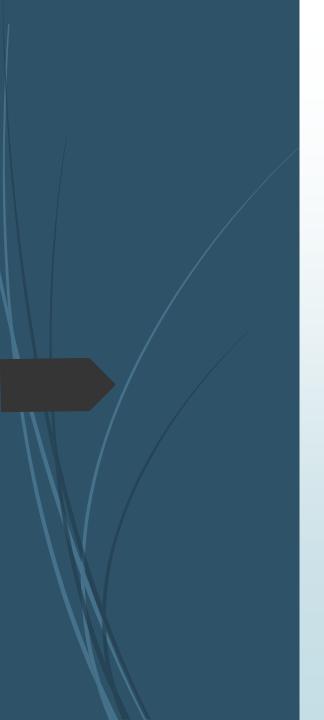
# EXPERT COMPANIONSHIP

- You can also serve this role for someone else!
- Functioning as an expert companion is a route to PTG
  - Your own experience with trauma becomes a basis for helping others
  - Reflect on the characteristics of the expert companions who have been most helpful to you; how can you embody these same characteristics?
  - No need for a fancy degree or special training. Expert companionship is, most essentially, a human skill. It's all about offering someone else the gift of presence.

#### **NEXT STEPS**

How can you connect with an expert companion this week?

How might you serve as an expert companion for someone else this week?



# Growth & Recovery After Trauma

Group #14

Katie Rider Mundey, Ph.D.

Contact: send secure message via MyHealthEVet (preferred means of contact) or call 912-408-2916

- Working to increase our posttraumatic growth (PTG)
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      - Spiritual development



Once emotions are managed, we can transition to finding meaning in our difficult experiences.



This requires <u>deliberate rumination</u> = purposeful reflection on and re-examination of the trauma.

Active not passive

Involves efforts to resolve the confusion caused by the trauma

Focus is on finding meaning in the trauma

# Finding Meaning: Where We've Been

- Personal Strengths: recognizing the strengths that have developed as a result of the trauma
- Appreciation of Life:
  - Identifying values and aligning our behavior with our values
  - Savoring
- Enhanced Relationships:
  - Expert companionship

## New Paths & Possibilities

#### Trauma often renders previous goals untenable

#### This ALWAYS involves loss and grief

- Allowing oneself to grieve is crucial
- Healthy grief looks like . . .
- Acknowledging the loss
- Permitting ourselves to feel the emotions associated with the loss
- •Sharing these emotions with others, as appropriate
- Practicing self-compassion in the face of grief
- Ritual/ceremony can be helpful here

## Reflection: Trauma & Grief

What are some things you have lost due to your trauma experiences? Dreams? Relationships? Physical abilities? Plans?

Have you allowed yourself to grieve these losses? If not, why so?

What might it look like to grieve these losses?

How could you incorporate ritual into the grieving process?

# New Paths & Possibilities

- New paths/possibilities often emerge from the change in values that results from experiencing trauma
- What once seemed very important may no longer feel especially important
- Ideal to allow our behaviors to flow from our values

## New Paths & Possibilities

Trauma can make us weary of making plans

However, we are unlikely to get where we want to go without *intention* 

#### Consider:

- Are there some activities and interests that no longer seem as important to you as they once were? If so, why not?
- What kinds of things do you wish you could do if you were not considering the practicalities involved?
- Identify 2-3 small ways you could begin to integrate into your life the things you wish you could do.

# Spiritual Change

- Trauma tends to make philosophers out of people
- When we experience something very painful and trying, it is not uncommon to gain a greater need and appreciation for connection beyond ourselves
- Trauma can provide us with a new way of "knowing"
- Spirituality/religion can be one key way of making sense of life and, therefore, of trauma
- Spirituality/religion can also increase our tolerance of not knowing/having all the answers

Reflection: Spiritual Change What role has spirituality/religion played in your trauma recovery process?

How might you harness spirituality/religion to assist in your trauma recovery process?

What are 1-2 small steps you could take to incorporate spirituality/religion into your trauma recovery process?

# Growth & Recovery After Trauma

Group #15

Katie Rider Mundey, Ph.D.

Contact: send secure message via MyHealthEVet (preferred means of contact) or call 912-408-2916

- Working to increase our posttraumatic growth (PTG)
  - PTG = Positive change that occurs as a result of the struggle with highly challenging life crises
    - 5 areas:
      - Greater appreciation of life and changed priorities
      - Warmer, more intimate relationships with others
      - Greater sense of personal strength
      - Recognition of new possibilities/paths for one's life
      - Spiritual development

Relaxation strategies (i.e., diaphragmatic Recognize and name breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, "Name it to tame it" emotions guided imagery) Using emotions to identify underlying Mindfulness Befriending the body unmet needs Self-compassion HALT Yoga

Once emotions are managed, we can transition to finding meaning in our difficult experiences.

This requires <u>deliberate rumination</u> = purposeful reflection on and re-examination of the trauma.

- Active not passive
- Involves efforts to resolve the confusion caused by the trauma
- Focus is on finding meaning in the trauma

#### Finding Meaning: Where We've Been

- Personal Strengths: recognizing the strengths that have developed as a result of the trauma
- Appreciation of Life:
  - Identifying values and aligning our behavior with our values
  - Savoring
- Enhanced Relationships:
  - Expert companionship
- New Paths and Possibilities:
  - Grieving what was and is no longer
  - Intentionally pursuing new paths and possibilities consistent with values
- Spiritual Growth
  - Spirituality as a source of meaning
  - Increased tolerance for the "unknown"

#### Review

#### Check-In

Where do you find yourself in the journey of making meaning out of trauma?

Consider your growth in the 5 key areas: personal strengths, appreciation of life, enhanced relationships, new paths and possibilities, spiritual growth

What might be the next step in your meaning-making journey?

Where are you stuck? What skills have you learned in this group that you could use to get unstuck?

#### Intention

Making meaning out of trauma rarely occurs w/o effort

Meaning and purpose are not so much discovered as they are <u>created</u>

Growth from trauma requires redefining the self:

Trauma is something that happened to you

Trauma is NOT who you are

What are other sources of identity you can draw on to define yourself?

How we define ourselves is the person we become.

Self-Definition

What words do you use to define/describe yourself?

Are these words healthy, accurate, and positive? If not, what can you do to change them?

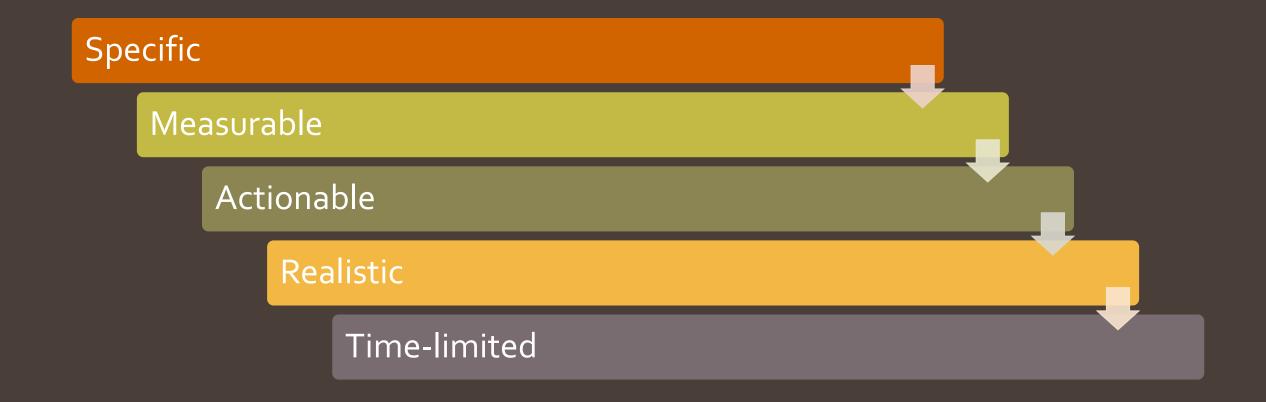
#### MAP

- Mission
- Aspiration
- Purpose
- Questions to ask yourself:
  - What REALLY matters to you in your life?
  - What do you want your health for?
  - What is your mission in life?
  - What is your calling?
  - What brings you a sense of joy and happiness?
  - What is your vision of your best possible self?

MAP

How congruent is your current life with your MAP?

If there are gaps, what goals can you develop to remove them?



## SMART Goals

# Tips

- Make sure your SMART goal flows directly from your MAP (we will not be motivated to achieve goals we don't care about)
- Consider the following domains:
  - Moving the body
  - Surroundings
  - Personal development
  - Food and drink
  - Recharge
  - Family, friends, and co-workers
  - Spirit and soul
  - Power of the mind
- Engage others in the goal-setting process

Be patient with yourself



Growth is NOT a linear process, nor is it ever complete



How can you offer self-compassion to yourself during the growth process?

Tips

- "Suffering is part and parcel of the human condition, but suffering can either embitter or ennoble us. It can ennoble us and become a spirituality of transformation when we find meaning in it."
  - Desmond Tutu

### PTG Summarized

# Thank you!

#### **Group Telehealth Agreement**

#### 1. Confidentiality

I understand the laws that protect the confidentiality of my medical information also apply to telehealth, including group treatment conducted over video telehealth. I understand that the VA has instituted procedures and policies to protect my privacy and confidentiality. The provider will lock the virtual medical room to ensure no unauthorized person will enter the session or listen. I understand that everything said and done in group is confidential. I agree to protect the group confidentiality, by not revealing the names of other members of the group, nor what is said and done in the group. I understand that if I violate this confidentiality, I will be removed from the group. I understand that there is an exception to this confidentiality that applies to the group provider. The one exception to confidentiality is when the provider believes that I may be a threat to myself or others.

#### 2. Risks and Consequences

The VA does not record telehealth sessions, including group telehealth sessions, without prior approval. I understand that I will not audio or video record any portion of the treatment session. I acknowledge that while this session will not be audio or video recorded by the VA, there is a risk that the session could be audio or video recorded and disseminated by a group member without knowledge or approval from VA or other group members. The consequence for any member audio or video recording any portion of the treatment session will be the removal from the group for violating confidentiality, as well as referral for prosecution to the full extent of federal and local laws. Applicable local laws may include the location of the provider and all members.

#### 3. Privacy

Participation in this group is voluntary, and I have the right to withdraw from the group at any time without affecting my right to future care or treatment or risking the loss or withdrawal of any program benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. No group member is ever required to answer any question, to participate in any activity, or to say anything. If I am asked questions or asked to participate in an activity that makes me feel uncomfortable, I understand that I have the right to decline, and I agree not to pressure any other group member to participate if they are uncomfortable. I agree to be in a quiet, private location during my session.

#### 4. Dignity

I agree that I will be tolerant, respectful, and supportive of other group members. I will avoid language that stereotypes or is derogatory to others and will provide only helpful feedback. I will be considerate of others who are talking, will give others a chance to talk, and will not engage in side conversations.

#### 5. Behavior

Safety is of the utmost importance. Violence or intimidation toward other group members is not tolerated. Gossip and grudges can be very destructive in a group. I agree that if I have something to say to another group member, I will say it to the member directly and in a respectful way rather than talk about him or her with others. I understand that if the provider believes that I am under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, I will be asked to leave the group.

I have read the agreement for group sessions and agree to follow it. The provider will note in my medical record that I have received, read and acknowledged this agreement